College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research

Spring 2024
EDSE 201 DL1: Introduction to Special Education
CRN: 13593, 3 – Credits

Instructor: Kelly Durso	**Meeting Dates:** 1/16/24 – 5/8/24
Phone: N/A	**Meeting Day(s):** N/A
E-Mail: kdurso@gmu.edu	**Meeting Time(s):** N/A
Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom	**Meeting Location:** N/A; Online
Office Location: Zoom	**Other Phone:** N/A

Note: **This syllabus may change according to class needs. Teacher Candidates/Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.**

Prerequisite(s):
None.

Co-requisite(s):
None.

Course Description
Provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Includes historical factors, legal aspects, etiology, characteristics, assessment, evidence-based practices, and support services for individuals with disabilities having needs for intervention ranging from mild to severe. Includes the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances.

Course Overview
EDSE 201 is a foundational course exploring essential concepts regarding individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. The course includes information about historical factors, legal aspects, etiology, characteristics, assessment, evidence-based practices, and support services for individuals with disabilities having needs for intervention ranging from mild to severe. Students will examine the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances.

Advising Contact Information
Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress in your program. Students in Special Education and Assistive Technology programs can contact the Special Education Advising Office at 703-993-3670 or speced@gmu.edu for assistance. All other students should refer to their assigned program advisor or the Mason Care Network (703-993-2470).

Advising Tip
Educators Rising Collegiate is a student organization for undergraduate students dedicated to the promotion of matters that educators are facing today. Join at Mason360.

Course Delivery Method
This course will be delivered fully online using an asynchronous format via Blackboard. You can log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @gmu.edu) and Patriot Pass password. The course site will be available on the posted class start date.

Learning activities include the following:
1. Readings, lectures, and discussions
2. Websites, videos, and other media-based course resources
3. Application activities and assignments
4. Quizzes and reflective activities
5. Performance-based assessments and certificates
6. Course feedback

Technical Requirements
> To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:
> - High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: [Browser support](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support) (https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support)
> - Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.

*Note: You may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to your computer or tablet as part of course requirements.

Expectations
> - Course Week:
>   Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will start on Tuesdays at 12:01a.m., and finish on Mondays at 11:55p.m. The course includes 8 modules distributed across the full semester using a consistent pattern of engagement for two weeks per module. I will open a new module every other Tuesday. Initial postings to the discussion board for that module are due the first Monday (Monday 1) after the module opens and all other assignments for that module are due the second Monday (Monday 2) after the module opens. Adjustments will be made to

accommodate holidays and other unforeseen events via BB announcements. Modules may be opened for your access earlier than scheduled, but no module assignments will be due earlier than the date noted on the Course Schedule.

- Log-in Frequency:
  It is encouraged that you actively check the course Blackboard site and your GMU email for communications from the me, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week.
- Participation:
  Engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:
  Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:
  Anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:
  Please be aware that this course is not self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the Course Schedule section of this syllabus. It is your responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule.
- Instructor Support:
  You are always welcome to schedule a one-on-one meeting with me to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Email me (kdurso@gmu.edu) to schedule a meeting, including suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette:
  The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Please always re-read your responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words*. Remember that you are not competing with classmates but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explore historical perspectives, models, theories, philosophies, and trends that provide the basis for special education practice.
2. Examine legal aspects of special education regarding litigation, legislation, and expectations associated with the identification, education, and evaluation of students with disabilities.
3. Discuss current regulations governing special education policies and practices including rights, responsibilities, and legal status of all parties.
4. Recognize characteristics of children and youth with disabilities across all IDEA

categories relative to age, varying levels of severity, and developmental differences manifested in cognitive, linguistic, physical, psychomotor, social, or emotional functioning.

5. Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between "normal" and "atypical" behaviors.
6. Describe the etiological factors and medical aspects associated with various disabilities.
7. Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including use of innovative technology.
8. Describe how to identify individual needs such as dyslexia and related evidence-based practices for intervention.
9. Discuss the dynamic influence of family systems relative to the education of students with disabilities.
10. Discuss the dynamic influence of culture and environmental settings relative to the education of students with disabilities.
11. Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children in context with professional standards of practice.
12. Describe how to recognize child abuse and prescribed research-based interventions to address abusive situations.

Professional Standards
This course is offered by George Mason University's Division of Special Education and disAbility Research in the College of Education and Human Development. The goal of the special education programs is to improve the lives, productivity, and education of persons with disabilities. Courses within the special education programs align with the standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major international special education professional organization, and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards: CEC Standard 1: Learner development and individual learning differences (InTASC 1, 2) & CEC Standard 3: Curricular content knowledge (InTASC 4, 5).

Required Texts
Friend, M. (2023). *Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school professionals* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

Course Performance Evaluation
Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement
For EDSE 201: No requirement to upload a Performance-based Assessment (PBA) to VIA/SLL.

Assignments and/or Examinations

    Performance-based Assessment
    (VIA submission required)
    None.

    College Wide Common Assessment
    (VIA submission required)
    None.

    Performance-based Common Assignments
    (No VIA submission required.)

    Child Abuse Awareness Certificate, which is included as a Module 5 assignment requiring submission in Blackboard.

    Dyslexia Awareness Certificate, which is included as a Module 3 assignment requiring submission in Blackboard.

    Cultural Competency Certificate, which is included as a Module 7 assignment requiring submission in Blackboard.

Other Assignments

Checklists are provided for each module detailing the assignments for each section of the course. Examples of graded elements of the course include assignments, discussions, quizzes, and reflections.

Assignment Summary

Below is a summary of the various kinds of work required for the course. Bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

Graded Tasks Summary	Possible Points

Varied Assignments (Seven Items)
   • Cycle of Sped KWL (15 pts.)
   • Certificates (5 X 25 pts. each)
	140

Discussions (8 X 20 pts. each)	160
Quizzes (8 X 15 pts. each)	120
Reflections (8 X 25 pts. each)	200
Total Possible Points	620

Student Evaluations of Teaching:

The student evaluation of teaching, or SET, is an online course survey. You are strongly encouraged to complete this form for each course as this feedback helps instructors and

administrators improve your class experiences. Towards the end of the course, you will receive email and Blackboard notifications when the evaluations open. Your anonymous and confidential feedback is only shared with instructors after final grades have been submitted. More information about the SET can be found on The Institute of Effectiveness and Planning website at https://oiep.gmu.edu/set/

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation
All coursework will be online in an Asynchronous format. There will be no face-to-face meetings. However, engagement with all elements provided in each module and timely participation in interactive opportunities is the expectation.

Late Work
All assignments (e.g., quizzes, activities, assignments, projects) must be submitted via Blackboard on or before the due date. In fairness to students who submit work on time, points will be deducted for late submissions (up to 10% per day). **Assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week late unless prior arrangements with the instructor have been made.**

Communication
The best way to contact me is through email, although I am happy to arrange phone calls or Zoom calls upon request. There is a Send Email icon in the Tools section on the left navigation bar in the course. My email (as well as the emails of your classmates) is located there. I will check email at least once a day on weekdays unless I notify you otherwise. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, if not sooner, on weekdays. On the weekends, I will check email at least once, which could increase response time to 48 hours. As communication is a two-way process, please plan to check your Mason email frequently. Please don't hesitate to reach out early and often if you have questions or concerns.

Grading (traditional rounding principles apply)

A	95-100%
A-	90-94%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

*Note: The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. See Academic Integrity Site (https://oai.gmu.edu/) and Honor Code and System (https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/). Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust,

and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Work submitted must be your own new, original work for this course or with proper citations.

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See Policies and Procedures (https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/). Professional dispositions are an essential function of a special educator's job, indicating that these dispositions are critical to develop and assess in special education licensure programs. In the College of Education and Human Development, dispositions are formally and separately evaluated in VIA/SLL at least three points in each student's program – a self-evaluation at the start of their program, a self-evaluation at the mid-point of their program, and a university supervisor's evaluation during internship. In special education undergraduate licensure programs, the initial self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 241, EDSE 361, EDSE 311), the mid-point self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 445, EDSE 465, and EDSE 419), and the internship evaluation is completed by instructors in EDSE 482, EDSE 483, and EDSE 484. In addition to these three designated evaluation times, students, instructors, and/or mentor teachers may complete program disposition assessments as part of other courses. Instructors and mentor teachers may complete observer-rated disposition assessments other times throughout the program, as needed. When dispositions are assessed, it is important that for areas where a positive disposition is rated as "not proficient," the student takes steps to grow as an educator.

Course Schedule

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Module	Topic	Deliverables	Due Dates
1 Opens 1/16/24	Getting Started Foundations of Special Education: Historical Perspectives, Legal Mandates, Personnel, Procedural Safeguards, and Ethical Practices	Complete all elements of the Module 1 Checklist (provided overview section of Module 1) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 1	Initial Post to Discussion Forum 1 (DF1) due 1/22/24 Rest of Module 1 assignments due 1/29/24
2 Opens 1/30/24	The Cognitive Continuum: Exploring Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Multiple Disabilities, and Giftedness	Complete all elements of the Module 2 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 2) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 2	Initial Post to DF2 due 2/5/24 Rest of Module 2 work due 2/12/24
3 Opens	The Dynamic Duo: Exploring Specific Learning Disabilities (LD)	Complete all elements of the Module 3 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 3)	Initial Post to DF3 due 2/19/24

2/13/24	and Emotional and Behavior Disorders (EBD)	Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 3	Rest of Module 3 work due 2/26/24
4 Opens 2/27/24 *Spring Recess Included	Spectrum of Considerations: Exploring Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)	Complete all elements of the Module 4 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 4) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 4	Initial Post to DF4 due 3/11/24* Rest of Module 4 work due 3/15/24*
5 Opens 3/12/24	The Physical Realm: Exploring Orthopedic Impairments (OI) and Other Health Impairments (OHI) including Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	Complete all elements of the Module 5 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 5) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 5	Initial Post to DF5 due 3/18/24 Rest of Module 5 work due 3/25/24
6 Opens 3/26/24	The Sensory Arena: Exploring Visual Impairments (VI) including Blindness, Hearing Impairments (HI), Deafness, and Deaf-Blindness	Complete all elements of the Module 6 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 6) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 6	Initial Post to DF6 due 4/1/24 Rest of Module 6 work due 4/8/24
7 Opens 4/9/24	Creating Opportunities for All Learners: Exploring: Exploring Multicultural Perspectives and Collaboration in Special Education	Complete all elements of the Module 7 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 7) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 7	Initial Post to DF7 due 4/15/24 Rest of Module 7 work due 4/22/24
8 Opens 4/23/24	Review and Wrap-up: The Past, the Present, and the Future	Complete all elements of the Module 8 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 8) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 8	Initial Post to DF8 due 4/29/24 Rest of Module 8 work due 5/6/24

*Deviates from standard format described earlier in this syllabus.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: See Core Values (http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/).

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code. See Honor Code and System (https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See Responsible Use of Computing (http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. See Disability Services (https://ds.gmu.edu/).

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments.

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to Blackboard Instructional Technology Support for Students (https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/).

- Learning Services (learningservices@gmu.edu) - Provides a variety of experience-based learning opportunities through which students explore a wide range of academic concerns. Services include support to students with learning differences, individual study strategy coaching, individualized programs of study, and referrals to tutoring resources. Presentations on a variety of academic topics such as time management, reading, and note taking are available to the university community. The programs are open to all George Mason University students free of charge.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone

confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as the [Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC)](https://ssac.gmu.edu) at 703-380-1434 or [Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)](https://caps.gmu.edu) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website [College of Education and Human Development (http://cehd.gmu.edu/).](http://cehd.gmu.edu/)

Appendix
Assessment Rubric(s)

> All rubrics are posted on Blackboard. The Performance-based Common Assessments for this course do not require a rubric as the certificates are either completed and submitted on time for full credit or they are not.